

## INTRODUCTION 引言

Let me begin by bringing up a controversial issue: cohabitation. About 12% of the population in the U.S. live together without getting married. They do the same things that married couples do. They share their home, household chores and expenses. Some even have kids. I am not here to criticize the choice of those people. They enjoy some benefits of marriage. They claim that they are committed to their partners. However, they do not want to go through a formal wedding. They prefer to maintain a relationship in their ways. In comparison, it is not up to us to decide how to treat our relationship with God. We must conduct Christian life according to God's way. Those who believe in Jesus must obey Him completely. Receiving baptism is an expression of submission to the Lord. As we always emphasize, the ceremony cannot save anyone. We are saved by Jesus, not by water. We do not want anyone to go through baptism without knowing the meaning of it. We do not want anyone who knows the meaning of baptism but is unwilling to receive it either. Today, we will look at Matthew 28:18-20. It is called the Great Commission. Jesus gave His disciples some last commands before He returned to heaven. The same instructions are for all churches. We will study the passage with a special focus on baptism.

## EXPLANATION 解釋

Let us consider a few words that begin with the letter "P" based on this passage. First is **Power**. Jesus says all power in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. The Father gave Jesus all the power in the universe. When He was in the world, Jesus taught the Bible with power and He performed miracles with power. He shared His power with the disciples as He sent them out for gospel mission. Today, the Lord gives us the same power as His followers. We need God's power to fight a spiritual warfare. Paul says in Ephesians 6:12 – **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.** Our opponents are not various philosophical ideas, secular values or political parties. Our real enemy is Satan who uses tactics to separate us from God. He uses government oppression and religious persecution to scare people from standing up for their faith. The devil also distracts people with materialism, pleasure and busyness of life. They cannot find the time and interest to think about spiritual matters. We must rely on God's power as we tell people about Jesus. We cannot convince them to accept Jesus by our words. We should quote Bible verses, since God's Word has the power to enter into people's mind and convict them of their sins. We must also pray that God will use His power to change lives. Equipped with God's power, then we are ready to **Preach** the gospel. Jesus told His disciples to do a few things. First, they must go to all nations. The good news is for all people. Every person is a sinner by birth, and every one of them needs the Savior. The Lord sends us to different places too. Other Christians may never meet the same people you see in school or at work, in your family and in your neighborhood. Therefore, you must go. With God's power, we change non-believers to believers. Notice Jesus uses a special phrase to describe it – make disciples. Christians must also be disciples. They are students and followers of the Lord. Salvation is not a two-step process. Many people mistakenly think that they can become believers first. Then some time later they decide to become disciples when they get

serious about their faith. Committing to Jesus is like committing to your spouse in marriage. You cannot tolerate a person who wants to get married first, then commits to you later. Before you say “I do” you have to make up your mind that you will do so 100%. A marriage lasts a lifetime, but salvation continues through eternity. True Christians are those who love the Lord totally, in every situation and forever. Jesus asks us to use baptism as a sign for our commitment to Him. Baptism is similar to making a vow in a wedding. You use the ceremony to show your intent. The candidates who will receive baptism today were already saved months or years ago when they received Jesus into their hearts. In a moment, they will share their testimonies about how they became believers. The Greek word for “baptize” means to submerge into water. Baptist churches believe that immersion is a proper way to baptize a person. The Baptist Faith & Message 2000 describes baptism as “*an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.*” (Baptist Faith & Message 2000; [bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/](http://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/)) Going into and coming out from the water represent our identification with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection. When Jesus rose from the dead to a new life, we too obtain a new life in Him. Receiving baptism is an important step. But it is not the completion of Christian life. The next step in disciple-making is to teach people to observe all that the Lord had commanded us. Paul says in Colossians 2:6-7 – **6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.** A growing relationship is a healthy relationship. We know more about the Lord and His will by reading the Bible at home and learning His Word in the church. We then apply the truths in daily life. People who falsely believe that they are saved by the water may disappear from the church soon after baptism. They think that they are dunked and done! For a similar reason, some couples believe that they have hit the target after a wedding ceremony. They got the boy/girl of their dream. They do not realize how much effort and sacrifice it takes to grow a relationship. Men who have such mentality will say to their wives: “Honey, I told you that I loved you at the wedding. I’ll inform you if I change my mind.” Guys like that are losers, not lovers! Our commitment to Jesus must be a growing relationship. We depend on God’s power, and we go out and preach the gospel. Jesus concludes His command with a **Promise**. He told the disciples that He would be with them always even to the end of the age. Jesus gave them a daunting task. From Jerusalem, this small group of believers would take the gospel to the rest of the world. The Lord was about to return to heaven. But He promised that they would never be alone. The Holy Spirit would live in them. He would give them wisdom to know the Bible. He would give them opportunities to meet people. He would give them boldness in persecution. The same promise is for us. The same Holy Spirit is in every believer. He leads us in the truth. He guides us through life struggles. He strengthens us when people challenge our faith. He gives us words to respond to tough questions. God is always with us.

## CONCLUSION 結論

Receiving baptism is an expression of submission to the Lord. Today is a major milestone for the few candidates. They are still spiritual babies regardless of their physical ages. We need to show our constant care to them. They are our brothers and sisters in the Lord. We should pray for their spiritual growth. We contact them when they are absent in church meetings. We help them when they have questions about the Bible. We are blessed to be in the same community of faith. Let us encourage each other in our walk with the Lord.

## INTRODUCTION 引言

首先我想提一個具爭議性的話題：同居。美國約有 12% 的人口未婚同居。他們像已婚夫婦做同樣的事情。他們分享住所、家務和開支。有些人甚至生了孩子。我並不是要批評那些人的選擇。他們享受婚姻的一些好處。他們也聲稱對自己的伴侶忠貞。然而，他們並不想經過正式的婚禮。他們以自己喜歡的方式維持關係。相比之下，我們如何對待與神的關係並不是由自己作主的。我們必須按照神的方式過基督徒的生活。相信耶穌的人必須完全順服祂。接受浸禮是順服主的表現。我們一直強調，這個儀式無法拯救任何人。我們是靠耶穌得救，而不是靠水得救的。我們不希望任何人在不知道浸禮意義的情況下接受儀式。我們也不希望任何明白浸禮意義的人但卻不願意接受儀式。今天，我們來看看馬太福音 28:18-20。我們稱之為大使命。那是耶穌在返回天堂之前給門徒的最後命令。所有教會都應遵守相同的指示。我們探討這段經文時會把重點放在浸禮。

## EXPLANATION 解釋

讓我們根據這段經文思考幾個以英文字母「P」開頭的單字。首先是能力 (Power)。耶穌說天上地下所有的能力都賜給祂了。天父把宇宙間所有的能力都給予耶穌。耶穌在世上時，祂以能力教導聖經，並使用能力行神蹟。當祂差遣門徒出去傳福音時，祂與他們分享能力。今天，主賜給我們作為祂的跟隨者同樣的能力。我們需要神的能力來參與屬靈的爭戰。保羅在以弗所書 6:12 說：**因我們並不是與屬血氣的爭戰，乃是與那些執政的、掌權的、管轄這幽暗世界的，以及天空屬靈氣的惡魔爭戰。**我們的對手不是各種哲學思想、世俗價值觀念或政黨。我們真正的敵人是撒旦，他使用各種手段將我們與神分開。他利用政權壓迫和宗教迫害來威嚇人們，使他們不敢表達自己的信仰。魔鬼也會利用物質主義、享樂和忙碌的生活來分散人們的注意力，使他們沒有時間和興趣去思考屬靈的事情。當我們向人們講述耶穌時，我們必須依靠神的能力。我們無法靠口才說服人們接受耶穌。我們必須引用經文，因為神的話語有能力進入人們的心並使他們承認自己的罪。我們也必須祈求神運用祂的能力來改變生命。當我們被神的能力充滿時，便可以去傳揚 (Preach) 福音了。耶穌告訴祂的門徒要做幾件事。首先，他們必須去到萬國。福音是全人類的好消息。每個人人生來都是罪人，每個人都需要救主。主差派我們到不同的地方。其他基督徒可能永遠不會遇見你在學校或工作場所、家庭或鄰居中見到的人。因此，你必須要出去。藉著神的能力，我們將非信徒轉變為信徒。請注意，耶穌使用了一個特殊的詞語來形容：使人成為門徒。基督徒也必須是門徒。他們是主的學生和跟隨者。救恩不是兩個步驟的過程。很多人錯誤地認為，他們可以先成為信徒。過了

一段時間，當他們對信仰認真時，他們才決定成為門徒。對耶穌的承諾就像在婚姻中對配偶的承諾一樣。你不能容忍一個想先結婚，後來才對你委身的人。在你說「我願意」之前，你必須下定決心，百分之百地實行。婚姻是一生一世，但救恩卻會持續到永恆。真正的基督徒是那些在任何情況下、永遠全心全意愛主的人。耶穌要求我們以浸禮作為對祂承諾的表示。浸禮就像婚禮中的誓言。你用儀式來表達你的意願。今天接受浸禮的弟兄姐妹在幾個月或幾年前接受耶穌進入他們心中時就已經得救了。稍後，他們將分享他們成為信徒的見證。希臘文中「洗禮」的意思是浸入水中。浸信會認為浸禮是為人施洗的合宜方式。2000 年浸信會信仰與信息說浸禮「是順服的行動，象徵信徒的信仰，與主同釘死，同埋葬，和同復活，浸入水中指信徒向罪而死，將舊人埋葬，復活是在基督裏的新生命與主同行。」(浸信會信仰與信息 2000 年版; [bfm.sbc.net/chinese/](http://bfm.sbc.net/chinese/)) 當耶穌從死裡復活獲得新生命時，我們也在祂裡面得到新生命。接受浸禮是重要的一步，但它並不是基督徒生活的結束。造就門徒的下一步就是教導人們遵守主所吩咐的一切。保羅在歌羅西書 2:6-7 說：**6 你們既然接受了主基督耶穌，就當遵他而行，7 在他裡面生根建造，信心堅固，正如你們所領的教訓，感謝的心也更增長了。**不斷增長的關係才是健康的關係。我們可以透過在家閱讀聖經和在教會學習神的話語更了解主和祂的旨意。然後我們在日常生活中實踐那些真理。那些錯誤地以為自己可以透過水得救的人在浸禮之後就會從教會消失。他們以為泡泡水便搞定了！基於類似的原因，一些夫婦認為，婚禮結束後，他們就達到了目標。他們得到了夢想的男孩或女孩。他們沒有意識到投資一段感情需要付出多少努力和犧牲。存這種心態的男人會對太太說：「親愛的，我在婚禮上就說過我愛妳，如果我改變主意的話，我會告訴妳的。」這樣的男人是失敗者，不是情人！我們對耶穌的承諾必須是一種不斷成長的關係。我們依靠神的能力，出去傳揚福音。耶穌以一個應許 (Promise) 總結祂的指令。祂告訴門徒，祂會永遠與他們同在，直到世界的末了。耶穌給他們一項艱鉅的任務。從耶路撒冷開始，這一小群信徒要把福音傳到世界其他地方。主即將回到天堂。但祂給他們應許，他們永遠不會孤單。聖靈會住在他們裡面。祂會賜給他們智慧去明白聖經。祂會給他們機會去遇到不同的人。當他們面對迫害時，祂會給予他們勇氣。我們也得到同樣的應許。每一個信徒心中都有同樣的聖靈。祂引導我們走向真理。祂帶領我們經歷人生的困難。當人們挑戰我們的信仰時，祂會給我們力量。祂會賜我們口才回答棘手的問題。神始終與我們同在。

## CONCLUSION 結論

接受浸禮是順服主的表現。今天對於幾位受浸的人來說是一個重要的里程碑。無論他們的年齡是多少，他們仍然是屬靈的嬰孩。我們需要不斷地關心他們。他們是我們在主內的弟兄姐妹。我們應該為他們的屬靈生命成長禱告。如果他們聚會缺席，我們可以和他們連繫。當他們對聖經有疑問時，我們可以幫助他們。我們很蒙福能夠在同一個信仰群體中。讓我們在與主同行的道路上互相鼓勵。